

Penny's passion for whisky

PENNY Ellis, who owns the Knockomie Hotel in Forres with husband Gavin, has taken over his directorship of the Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival this year and is on her way to becoming one of Scotland's top female whisky experts.

Before becoming a director of the festival, she was appointed an honorary stillman at her local distillery, Benromach, and gained a distinction in the Certificate of Expertise in the Sales and Service of Scotch Whisky from the Scotch Whisky Training School.

Penny will be hosting two events at Knockomie during the festival – a whisky-tasting



and gourmet dinner featuring several different styles of Benromach Speyside Single Malt, attended by Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, global brand ambassador for Benromach, and a celebration of chocolate and whisky that will see the pairing of chocolate produced by a Scottish artisan chocolatier and some of Speyside's finest single malts.

She said: "I've held a keen interest in malt whisky since marrying Gavin and moving to Knockomie 17 years ago. I decided to start

learning more last year and rediscovered my passion and enthusiasm for it. I want to continue to develop my skills and to encourage more women to follow suit."

Penny: Here's to a dram successful whisky career

A FORRES hotelier is well on her way to becoming one of Scotland's first female whisky experts – after being made director of the Spirit of Speyside Whisky Festival.

Penny Ellis from the Knockomie Hotel succeeds her husband Gavin, as director of the festival, which runs between April 29 and May 3, themed along whisky, food, music and the heritage and culture of the Speyside area with a number of events lined-up including tastings, masterclasses, concerts, dinners, distillery tours, outdoors events, book signings and art exhibitions.

Mrs Ellis has also become an honorary stillman at the Benromach Distillery and has gained a distinction in the Certificate of Expertise in the sales and service of Scotch whisky from the Scotch Whisky Training School.

She is hosting two events at the Knockomie Hotel for the festival starting on Friday, April 30, with a whisky-tasting and gourmet dinner featuring several different styles of Benromach Speyside single malt whisky.

A tour of the Benromach Distillery is part in the ticket price and during the evening Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, global brand ambassador for Benromach Speyside single malt Scotch Whisky will be sharing the secrets of this wonderful single malt with the dinner guests.

The second event on Saturday, May 1, is a celebration of chocolate and whisky that will see the pairing of chocolate produced by a Scottish artisan chocolatier and some of Speyside's finest single malts.

"I've held a keen interest in malt whisky since marrying Gavin and moving to Knockomie 17 years ago," said Mrs Ellis. "I decided to start learning more last year and rediscovered my passion and enthusiasm for it. I want to continue to develop my skills and to encourage more women to follow suit."

Alongside her husband, Mrs Ellis has been



Looking forward to The Speyside Whisky Festival is local hotelier Penny Ellis.

running Knockomie Hotel since 1993. Her team at the hotel are hospitality assured accredited twice and improved their score in the second assessment from an independent accreditor, underpinning the team's commitment to customer care.

She works tirelessly to ensure that everything is done to make guests' stays as enjoyable and memorable as possible and Knockomie won The Highlands and Island Tourism Awards Customer Care Award 2009.

Mr Ellis was the recipient of last year's Silver Thistle Award as well as The Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards Ambassador of the Year 2009.

For more info about the festival visit: www.spiritofspeyside.com.

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